

Governor's Office of Species Conservation

Strategic Plan

For the Fiscal Years ending June 30, 2005 – June 30, 2008

Submitted September 9, 2004

Signed:

James L. Caswell, Administrator

Approved:

Dirk Kempthorne, Governor
Or Brian Whitlock, Chief of Staff

Governor's Office of Species Conservation

2005 – 2008 Strategic Plan

Mission

To coordinate policies and programs related to the conservation of threatened, endangered and candidate species in Idaho.

Vision

The Governor's Office of Species Conservation is dedicated to planning, coordinating and implementing the State's actions to preserve, protect and restore species listed as threatened and endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). This work will be done through coordination with the State natural resource agencies and with the input of the citizens of Idaho, while taking into consideration the economic vitality of the State.

Principles and Values

- Rely upon science and common sense in developing conservation programs
- Involve all parties impacted by recovery decisions
- Understand and incorporate Idaho values into conservation measures
- Incorporate the State's need for economic vitality into considerations for species recovery

Issues

1) Work with State natural resource agencies to coordinate actions on ESA-listed species. OSC relies on the expertise and knowledge of the State agencies in species recovery. Indeed, myriad agencies have an important and necessary role in conservation programs. These roles include:

- Idaho Department of Fish & Game (IDFG), to understand the aquatic, terrestrial and plant species and their needs
- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), to provide protections on media such as air, water and soils
- Idaho Department of Lands (IDL), to provide protections on State lands and habitat protection
- Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), in their efforts to maintain a road way system while minimizing impacts upon threatened or endangered species
- Idaho Department of Agriculture (IDA), to use best management practices to protect agricultural land-use activities and habitat protection
- Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation (IDPR), in their efforts to maintain recreational opportunities while minimizing impacts upon threatened or endangered species
- Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (ISCC), in concert with the Idaho Soil Conservation Districts (ISCDs), in the development of on-the-ground measures for species and habitat protections
- Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), to incorporate efforts regarding water use and stream protection

Actions

- OSC will coordinate the State's actions on all ESA recovery plans, management plans, public comment periods, biological opinions, guidance programs and species-specific recovery projects
- OSC will coordinate with IDFG with its expertise in fish, wildlife and plant biology and conservation activities
- OSC will coordinate recovery actions with DEQ's development of TMDL implementation plans and the protection of beneficial uses
- OSC will coordinate recovery measures consistent with IDL's Forest Practices Act and its Cumulative Watershed Effects analyses
- OSC will coordinate with ITD's long-range road way planning process for existing or new road ways which may impact threatened or endangered species or its habitat
- OSC will coordinate actions with IDWR's Comprehensive State Water Plan and its designations of minimum stream flows and State-designated protected rivers
- OSC will participate in, and consider funding for, on-the-ground measures taken by the ISCC and ISCDs to protect species and habitat

2) Facilitate the development of protection plans for private landowners who have threatened or endangered species on their property or who have the potential to assist in the recovery of the species.

Actions

- Implement and monitor the Candidate Conservation Agreement for Slickspot Peppergrass
- Develop a statewide conservation strategy for greater sage grouse
- Participate in development of Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for southern Idaho ground squirrel
- Complete the Upper Salmon Basin Agreement
- Assist Boundary County and City of Bonners Ferry in developing an ESA agreement
- Complete the Clearwater / Salmon forestry agreement

3) Solicit, provide, and delegate funding to efforts to: a) preclude the need for listing of species through conservation efforts; b) preserve and restore listed species through conservation efforts; and c) delist recovered species through conservation efforts. On-the-ground measures funded through this program, in conjunction with adequate planning and monitoring, will preclude the need for listing and ultimately remove species from the ESA.

Direct OSC funding will be provided for:

- Salmon Recovery
- Coldwater Fisheries
- Wolves
- Snails (pending before Congress)

- Slickspot Peppergrass (pending before Congress)
- Sage Grouse (existing and pending before Congress)

Indirect funding may be provided by:

- Idaho Department of Environmental Quality / Idaho Soil Conservation Commission (319 grants)
- Idaho Department of Water Resources (RPA 151 funds)
- Idaho Department of Agriculture (CAFO/AFO funds)
- Idaho Department of Fish and Game (LIP/HIP, Section 6, technical assistance)
- Idaho Department of Lands (FPA / CWE programs)
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FRIMA funds)
- U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service (Farm Bill)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Watershed Assistance)
- Bonneville Power Administration (Fish & Wildlife Program)
- NOAA Fisheries (Community-Based Restoration Program)

4) Develop processes to de-list or re-categorize species which should be removed from the ESA or have changed in management status. To date, OSC has been involved with:

- Amend the federal rule governing the nonessential experimental population of wolves
- Develop program to review the population status of bull trout for possible de-listing
- Develop Grizzly Bear Plan for the Yellowstone ecosystem
- Participate in creation of Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for southern Idaho ground squirrel
- Comments on recovery plan for northern Idaho ground squirrel
- Comments on bull trout recovery plan
- Comments on bull trout critical habitat designation

Actions

- De-list one of five snail species on Middle Snake
- Develop conservation plans to preclude the need to list sage grouse
- Develop conservation plans to preclude the need to list spotted frog
- Develop conservation plans to preclude the need to list of burbot
- Participate in development of Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances to preclude the need to list southern Idaho ground squirrel

5) In conjunction with the Northwest Power and Conservation Council, coordinate the development of "Subbasin Plans" to protect, restore and recover threatened or endangered fish, wildlife and plants in Idaho. OSC will facilitate, coordinate and lead the implementation of subbasin planning statewide that will include:

- State agencies
- Federal agencies

- Local governments
- Native American Tribes
- Environmental interests
- Industry interests

Actions

- Assist in the adoption of plans within all six provinces in Idaho into the Council's Fish & Wildlife Program
- Lead project prioritization for funding consideration by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and the Bonneville Power Administration

6) Advance Governor Kempthorne's continuing efforts to update and modernize the ESA. OSC will organize the on-the-ground results of the Governor's program into an effective case for ESA reform, namely:

- Increase the reliable use of "best available data"
- Recognize fully the State's efforts under Section 4 of the ESA
- Develop efficient processing of de-listing petitions
- Improve and better utilize Section 6 of the ESA
- Increase the pace of agreement development under Section 10 of the ESA
- Mesh funding and granting opportunities with ESA policy

Actions

- Secure federal funding for Idaho's efforts in salmon recovery actions
- Develop a Rare and Declining Species Policy for Idaho
- Complete aforementioned agreements and de-listings regarding sage grouse, anadromous fish, wolves, grizzly bear and snails
- Participate in policy forums and publish analyses on ESA reform
- Investigate and secure appropriate funding sources